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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/594,721	06/16/2000	Yuji Yamamoto	048369/0117	2350

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EXAMINER

RUDE, TIMOTHY L

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2871

DATE MAILED: 02/06/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/594,721

Applicant(s)

YAMAMOTO ET AL.

Examiner

Timothy L Rude

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 2 and 4-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 June 2000 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2. 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because, in Figure 1, reference characters "204", "219", "220", and "221" have all been used to designate the liquid crystal layer. Furthermore, "202" and "208" are not defined in the specification, "213" does not point to anything, and a statement regarding the numbering commonality of the other figures is needed, or all of their numbers need to be individually defined in the specification. A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claim 8 recites the limitation "said transparent electrode". There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in claim 8. It appears the recitation should be - - said pixel electrode - - .

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

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(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

3. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kurauchi et al (Kurauchi) USPAT 5,917,572.

As to claim 1, Kurauchi discloses in Figure 22 a liquid-crystal display panel comprising: a plurality of pixels; and a columnar spacer, 204, formed and disposed on a portion of a surface of a multi-layered films, 183 and 184, formed on a surface of a substrate facing to a transparent electrode provided in at least a part of pixels, 188, among a plurality of pixel portions forming a liquid-crystal display panel and said portion of said multi-layered film having little variation in thickness (col. 17, line 25 through col. 18, line 16).

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1, 2, and 4-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Miyazaki et al (Miyazaki) USPAT 5,757,451.

As to claim 1, Miyazaki discloses, in Figures 2 and 3, a liquid-crystal display panel comprising: a plurality of pixels; and a columnar spacer, 58r, 58g, and 58b, formed and disposed on a portion of a surface of a multi-layered films, 52, 53, 54, 55, and 56, formed on a surface of a substrate, 51, facing to a transparent electrode provided in at least a part of pixels, 61, among a plurality of pixel portions forming a liquid-crystal display panel and said portion of said multi-layered film having little variation in thickness (col. 6, line 32 through col. 9, line 18).

As to claim 2, Miyazaki discloses, in Figures 2 and 3, a liquid-crystal display panel according to claim 1, wherein said part of said pixel portion having little variation in film thickness is a contact hole (region over 52 in Figure 3).

As to claim 4, Miyazaki discloses, in Figure 2, a liquid-crystal display panel according to claim 1, wherein said columnar spacer is formed on a pixel electrode, 56 (source electrode electrically connected to transparent pixel electrode 61), and passes through a transparent electrode film, 61.

As to claim 5, Miyazaki discloses, in Figure 2, a liquid-crystal display panel according to claim 1, wherein said columnar spacer is made of a material selected from a group consisting of an organic resist material (col. 5, line 3 through col. 9, line 18).

As to claim 6, Miyazaki discloses, in Figure 2, a liquid-crystal display panel according to claim 1, wherein the type of said liquid-crystal display panel is one type selected from a group consisting of a color type (col. 6, line 32 through col. 9, line 18).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyazaki.

As to claim 7, the method for manufacturing a liquid-crystal display panel comprising: forming in each of a plurality of pixel regions on a substrate a color film, a signal electrode, a gate electrode, and a pixel electrode; forming a transparent electrode film thereover; then forming a columnar spacer on said transparent electrode film minimally in a part of contact holes provided on said pixel regions; and then disposing an opposing substrate on which is formed an opposing common transparent electrode

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so as to oppose said transparent electrode film is obvious given the teachings of Miyazaki (Figures 2 and 3, and col. 5, line 3 through col. 9, line 18).

As to claim 8, the method for manufacturing a liquid-crystal display panel comprising: forming in each of a plurality of pixel regions on a substrate a color film, a signal electrode, a gate electrode, and a pixel electrode; then forming a columnar spacer on said transparent electrode film minimally in a part of contact holes provided on said pixel regions; forming a transparent electrode film on said color film, signal electrode, gate electrode, and pixel electrode, with the exception of said columnar spacer; and then disposing an opposing substrate on which is formed an opposing common transparent electrode so as to oppose said transparent electrode Film, with interposing said columnar spacer therebetween is obvious given the teachings of Miyazaki (Figures 2 and 3, and col. 5, line 3 through col. 9, line 18).

As to claim 9, Miyazaki teaches the use of a columnar spacer made of a material selected from a group consisting of an organic resist material (col. 5, line 3 through col. 9, line 18).

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claim 3 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: As to claim 3, a search of relevant prior art did not disclose a liquid-crystal display panel according to claim 1, wherein said columnar spacer is formed on a transparent electrode film.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Timothy L Rude whose telephone number is (703) 305-0418. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, William L Sikes can be reached on (703) 308-4842. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-7724 for regular communications and (703) 308-7725 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-4900.



Timothy L Rude
Examiner
Art Unit 2871



William L. Sikes
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 2800